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Report Cuba Ransom Deal in Last Stage

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Miami, Dec. 20 [Special]—

Developments in the ransom liberation of 1,113 Bay of Pigs invasion prisoners moved so swiftly today that official sources here indicated the men might be in Miami by Sunday.

The deal for the pre-Christmas freedom of the prisoners in exchange for 53 million dollars worth of drugs, medical equipment, and food was assured of completion by these moves:

1. James B. Donovan, New York attorney, flew back to Havana this morning after his overnight visit here. He had former United States Surgeon General Leroy Burney with him. Burney, said to be a consultant of a large drug manufacturing firm, is reported going along to assure Castro he will get the drugs he wants.

"Any Moment," Havana Says
2. Havana radio announced that the deal is ready to be consummated "at any moment" and that the indemnity demanded by Castro "would be paid momentarily."

3. The freighter African Pilot began to load the ransom cargo as soon as it docked at Port Everglades. It will sail for Havana Saturday morning.

4. Pan American Airways has made two four-engine cargo aircraft available to air lift drugs to Havana. It also had made available two four-engine passenger planes to fly prisoners from Havana to the Homestead air force base. The base expects to handle one plane each hour and a half. The air lift of the prisoners will take two days.

Ask for Hospital Beds

5. Miami hospitals were asked to make 175 beds ready to receive sick prisoners upon their arrival. This request was made by the United States government officers who are handling the arrangements. Other sources said 300 beds and 100 Spanish-speaking doctors have been requested for this purpose.

6. Atty. Gen. Robert Kennedy, who is reported to be coordinating operations from Washington, has issued orders that the prisoners should be treated as returning American residents and that all formalities should be streamlined for their rapid processing.

7. A hot meal has been ordered to be served in the mess hall at Homestead air force base for the prisoners as soon as they arrive.

A press headquarters coordinator has been loaned to Atty. Gen. Kennedy by the state department. He is Richard I. Phillips, veteran public affairs adviser on Latin America to Secretary of State Dean Rusk. Castro has apparently accepted a 9 million dollar reduction in the original ransom price of the 62 million dollars in fines that were imposed on the prisoners by his military courts last year.

Phillips said that so far as he knows Castro agreed to accept 53 million dollars in drugs, medical equipment, and food for the liberation of the prisoners.